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CONTACT: Jordan Wilhelmi | jordan@unbendablemedia.com
Jill Siegelbaum | jill@sligolawgroup.com
Greg Pinto | gregpinto@dclawcollective.com

More than 140 Federal Employees Sue Trump Administration Over Politically Motivated Mass Firings Disguised as Reductions in Force

Groundbreaking lawsuit alleges systematic due process violations and capture of federal appeals board designed to protect workers from political purges

WASHINGTON — Today, Lawyers for Good Government (L4GG), the DC Law Collective (DCLC), and Sligo Law Group, PLLC, (SLG), filed a federal lawsuit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Maryland on behalf of more than 140 career federal employees challenging the Trump administration's use of so-called "reductions in force" (RIF) to carry out mass terminations across the federal government.

The complaint argues that the administration's actions violated the Constitution, the Administrative Procedure Act, and the Privacy Act by depriving employees of their jobs, pay, benefits, and professional reputations without meaningful notice or an opportunity to be heard.

Read the full complaint here

Plaintiffs, including former employees of the Departments of Justice, State, Education, Health & Human Services, Homeland Security, and USAID, allege their politically motivated firings were disguised as RIFs to circumvent constitutional due process protections. The administration is also accused of relying on inaccurate and incomplete personnel records, and forcing workers into a Merit Systems Protection Board (MSPB) appeals process that has been deliberately weakened and can no longer provide meaningful review.

"This administration fired people for cause in all but name—publicly accusing them of discrimination and waste—but labeled it a RIF to deny them any chance to defend themselves," **said Amy Powell, Litigation Director at Lawyers for Good Government.** "These were not lawful reductions in force. They were firings carried out without due process, using broken systems and bad data."

"Through multiple Administrations, I dedicated my career to ensuring the State Department spent tax dollars legally and responsibly," **said Plaintiff Doreen Mullady**. "But then found myself accused of being politically motivated and subversive, rather than the credible civil servant I had proven myself to be after 10 years of service."

"Doreen, like so many of our clients, has been smeared by some of the most powerful people in the world all while being denied their constitutional rights," **said Greg Pinto of DC Law Collective**. "This administration not only illegally fired these people, but has now locked them into a rigged process. That's unjust and exactly what the Constitution prohibits."

The lawsuit details how administration officials publicly attacked employees while denying them any opportunity to contest allegations before termination. Administration officials publicly called

terminated employees “internal adversaries” and “left-wing activists,” accusing them of illegal conduct and waste, all without providing any opportunity to defend themselves.

The Complaint further argues:

- **Firings were disguised as RIFs to avoid constitutional protections.** Employees were publicly accused of wrongdoing and waste, but denied any hearing before termination, a clear violation of due process when the government stigmatizes employees in ways that damage their future employment prospects. Agencies manipulated the process to target individuals. For example, the State Department exploded its ‘competitive areas’ —the pools of employees who compete for retention— from under 40 to approximately 1,500, with some consisting of a single employee, ensuring disfavored workers would be terminated.

- **The MSPB has been captured by the administration.** President Trump fired MSPB Chair Cathy Harris and issued an executive order asserting presidential control over the independent agency's decision-making. OMB Director Russell Vought, who is simultaneously overseeing USAID's closure, now controls MSPB's budget and performance standards.

- **The MSPB appeals process has been rendered futile.** The administration fired tens of thousands of people who flooded MSPB with over 18,750 appeals in eight months, nearly four times what the agency decided in all of fiscal year 2024. The administration then proposed cutting the MSPB’s budget. Most plaintiffs have seen zero progress months after filing. Plaintiffs are not aware of any of the over 17,000 RIF appeals filed in 2025 reaching a final decision.

- **Positions were eliminated on paper while work continued.** Many Plaintiffs at the State Department and elsewhere have seen job postings for their positions that were supposedly “abolished.” ATF fired DEIA office employees despite having developed a plan to reassign them to mission-critical recruiting positions—a plan abandoned only after OPM ordered their termination. DHS fired civil rights staff from statutorily mandated offices, then immediately began hiring new personnel for identical jobs.

- **These RIF terminations relied on inaccurate, incomplete and unverified information.** Agencies terminated thousands of employees based on inaccurate data and RIF documents were riddled with inaccurate information, including omitting some Plaintiffs’ veteran’s preferences.

Plaintiffs seek restoration to their positions with full back pay and benefits, a declaration that the RIFs violated due process, damages under the Privacy Act for use of admittedly inaccurate employment records, and either immediate federal court review or a meaningful MSPB appeal process with judicial oversight. If successful, the decision could provide relief to thousands of federal employees trapped in the MSPB system with the same fact pattern.

"When the government fires someone for cause, it must provide a hearing because stigmatizing accusations damage the employee's ability to get another job,” **said Jill Siegelbaum, Partner at Sligo Law Group**. “These are real people who dedicated their careers to public service. They've lost salaries, health insurance, and retirement credit. And the system designed to protect them has been hijacked."

This lawsuit represents more than 140 federal workers sharing their individual stories. Detailed declarations from many of those involved will be provided in court filings in the coming weeks, and can be provided, once available, upon request. **If you're interested in speaking with any members of the legal team or one of the plaintiffs involved, we'd be happy to help arrange interviews.**

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Lawyers for Good Government *(L4GG) is a nonprofit organization that harnesses the power of 125,000 lawyers, law students, and advocates in the fight for justice. We identify where lawyers can make the greatest impact and mobilize them to defend democracy and the rule of law, protect civil and human rights, and advance environmental justice through coordinated legal action and advocacy efforts that create meaningful change for all Americans.*

D.C. Law Collective, PLLC *(DCLC) is a law firm dedicated to protecting the rights of federal employees through vigorous representation. Founded by former federal employees, DCLC handles all matters related to federal employment.*

Sligo Law Group, PLLC *(SLG) is a national law firm founded and staffed by former U.S. Department of Education attorneys. We provide legal advice, guidance and representation on federal education law to public school districts, charter schools, state educational agencies, colleges and universities, education and civil rights advocacy groups, and other mission-driven organizations nationwide.*